

Report on	Response to the DAERA Consultation on the Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland
Date of Meeting	2 December 2019
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Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Members on the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA) consultation on the Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland and to provide a Mid Ulster District Council response to the consultation.
2.0	Background
2.1	DAERA issued a consultation on 18 September 2019 in relation to an Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland (WMPNI). The consultation open until 5pm on Monday 23 December 2019.
2.2	Appendix 1 encloses a copy of the Public Consultation Document on the Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland whilst Appendix 2 is the Draft Mid Ulster District Council Response.
3.0	Main Report
	Overview
3.1	It is a fundamental premise of a civilised society that everyone should have the right to live in a healthy environment, with access to sufficient and appropriate environmental resources for a healthy life. Northern Ireland's environment is its most important asset and it is crucial to each and every one of us. It is one of the main reasons people from other countries and regions visit, bringing money into the local economy and raising our profile around the world. It affects our economy, our health and well-being, and it facilitates social interaction. Clean air, good quality water and the green and blue spaces, to which we have access, are part of our 'natural capital' - while opportunities for outdoor recreation contribute significantly to our physical and mental wellbeing.
3.2	We are fortunate to have a relatively good environment. However, recent assessments have identified that our environment is under threat and we are faced with the challenge of how to protect our important natural asset, while supporting its sustainable use. We have particular challenges in Northern Ireland, due to the very different characteristics of our

	economy, our geographical location and other factors, such as the continued prevalence of coal and oil as fuels, all of which increase pressures on the environment from agricultural, transport, energy supply and residential sources.
3.3	<p>A Northern Ireland Environment Strategy (“the Environment Strategy”) is required to form the basis for a coherent and effective set of interventions that can deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment and thereby improve the health and well-being of our citizens, create opportunities to develop our economy and play our part in protecting the global environment for many decades to come.</p> <p>Why DAERA Are Consulting</p>
3.4	The form and content of any Environment Strategy is a matter for a DAERA Minister and NI Executive. However, in the current absence of Ministers, we wish to obtain as broad view as possible on what a future Environment Strategy might seek to address in order to inform an incoming Minister.
3.5	The purpose of this consultation is to give, the people who will be affected by the decisions taken in the future, an opportunity to express your views on what our environment should look like in the future, what our environmental priorities and objectives should be, and how we should achieve these. DAERA have made some suggestions regarding potential issues to be addressed to encourage debate but that is all they are, suggestions – nothing is set in stone at this stage.
3.6	DAERA have already engaged with a range of stakeholders but we look forward to receiving responses from all sectors, age groups, organisations and individuals. Some of these responses will be from experts in their field and while those will be welcomed, DAERA are just as interested to hear ideas, thoughts and opinions from all walks of life. Every response will be carefully considered and fed into the policymaking process.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: None
	Human: Officer time in reviewing the and drafting the response.
	Risk Management: None at this juncture.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: Not at this juncture.

	Rural Needs Implications: Not at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are requested to approve to Council the Draft Response (as set out at Appendix 2) of this report to the DAERA Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1: Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland Public Discussion Document.
6.2	Appendix 2: Proposed Mid Ulster District Council response to the DAERA Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland
6.,3	References: The Settlement Health Map (Barton and Grant 2006); Public Health and Landscape, Creating Healthy Places, Landscape Institute Position Statement